

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application, of which claims 1-11 have been amended. No new claims have been added.

Claims 1-7 and 11-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 3,463,145 to Whitaker in view of U.S. Patent 5,702,332 to Hseih, in view of U.S. Patent 4,332,381 to Lyons and further in view of U.S. Patent Publication 2002/1063231 to Hoshino.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Whitaker discloses a heavily padded chair that has a basic configuration of an ogee curve. The chair is mounted on a pair of spaced vertically disposed supports that arise from a suitable base. The aforesaid supports are so connected to the bottom of the chair that the chair may be moved from a near horizontal to a near vertical position when the controls located on one arm of the chair are operated. The controls activate an electric motor that is suitably connected to movement mechanism of the chair by means of a screw shaft.

Hseih has been cited to teach a foot plate 16 mounted on the base for receiving bottoms of feet of the user.

Hoshino has been cited for teaching a curved saddle support, which Whitaker fails to disclose.

Lyons has been cited for teaching foot plates being adaptable and configured to be movable relative to the base in up and down directions via telescoping mechanism 41, 42, 43.

None of the cited references teaches, mentions or suggest a coupling mechanism, a drive source and a control unit, as disclosed from page 4, line 30 to page 5, line 1 of the specification of the instant application.

In addition, each of the cited references fails to teach the mechanical configuration of the present invention, obtained by a combination of a saddle, a coupling mechanism, a drive source and a control unit, and also lacks the motivation.

In the present invention, it is possible to limit a direction of the relative positional displacement between the foot position and the position of center of gravity, to a direction of flexion and extension of knee joint through a saddle (22), a coupling mechanism (e.g., 4), a drive source (e.g., 6) and a control unit (10), especially by the combination of the saddle (22) and the coupling mechanism.

Accordingly, claims 1-7 and 11 have been amended to recite these distinctive features, and the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 8, 10 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Whitaker, in view of Hsieh, Lyons, Hoshino and U.S. Patent 6,357,825 to Bavaresco.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Bavaresco has been cited for teaching a saddle width adjuster but, like the other cited references, fails to teach or suggest the features recited in the amendments to claims 1 and 11, from which these claims depend.

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 8-9 and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Whitaker, in view of Hsieh, Lyons, Hoshino and further in view of U.S. Patent 608,682 to Jamieson.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Jamieson has been cited for teaching a saddle width adjuster but, like the other cited references, fails to teach or suggest the features recited in the amendments to claim 1 from which these claims depend.

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 1-14, as amended, are in condition for further examination.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 04-1105.

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Respectfully submitted,

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